

Q: This is Oral History Interview, Number 409, conducted by Captain Donald B. Fraser, United States Naval Reserve, for the National Parks Service and the USS Arizona Memorial, at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu, December 6th, 2001, at approximately 12:40. The interviewee is Mr. Tom Murray Anderson, who was an ensign in the United States Naval Reserve, aboard USS UTAH, on December 7th, 1941. Mr. Anderson, for the record, please state your full name, your place of birth, and the date of birth.

Tom Murray Anderson: Tom Murray Anderson Junior, and it's uh.. April-- I mean uh- uh.. Spokane, Washington, and April 26th, 1920 is my birthday.

Q: What did you consider to be your hometown in 1941?

Tom Murray Anderson: It've been Tacoma, Washington.

Q: What were your parents' names sir?

Tom Murray Anderson: My father's name was Tom Murray Anderson, like mine, and- and my mother's Helen McGregor Anderson.

Q: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Tom Murray Anderson: I had one brother and that was uh.-- his name was Warren Barry Anderson; just the one brother.

Q: Was he older or younger than you?

Tom Murray Anderson: Younger than me.

Q: Younger than you. Where did you go to high school?

Tom Murray Anderson: We went to Rochester Union High School near Tacoma, and then I also went to Stadium High School in- in Tacoma, where I was a trackman in my senior year.

Q: What events?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well I- I just ran the half mile, and I won the first and the last race that I had. So I was an unblemished record <laughs>. Except at State, they beat me over there at State. They- they tricked me, I guess, or doubled-teed me or something there.

Q: 880, that's a tough race. What attracted you to the Navy and how did you come into the Navy?

Tom Murray Anderson: It was through my mother. She'd uh.. read in the paper about they were starting this V7 program in which you took uh.. college graduates and people with at least two years of college, and then to run 'em through the 90-day-- went to midshipman school, that's how I-- for my mother. And- and that was down in Aberdeen, Washington, where I was going to school. And.. so she got me in the Navy.

Q: And when was that?

Tom Murray Anderson: Oh let's see. I signed up-- well it would be-- it was uh.. probably about June of 1940.

Q: I'm not that familiar with the V7 program. Were you a college student?

Tom Murray Anderson: Right. I was a college student. See, the- the requirements was that you would be a college graduate, unless you had-- I mean, I had math and- and science, a strong course in math and sciences, that got me in as a two-year certificate of graduation.

Q: So you were in college for two years?

Tom Murray Anderson: For two years, yeah.

Q: And then did you come on Active Duty at that point or--

Tom Murray Anderson: Well I- I went to the-- they had the uh.. kind of a shakedown cruise for all the candidates. I- I was on the Tuscaloosa for a month, and some others were on battleships in different-- and then they decided whether they were going to send us to midshipman school or not, and I graduated to midshipman school. And then I was on, they called it the Prairie State in New York, and- and we lived on that ship. It wasn't like it was later. But uh.. then I put in a three months course there, in New York, on the Prairie State. It's another name for-- what was it?-- the Illinois. The USS Illinois is the old battleship; it was.

Q: And when you completed that training, what was your next assignment?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well then I- I-- uh.. I- I- I volunteered for duty immediately. I wanted to- to go to-- because I had no job and no prospect of one, so going into the Navy was- was get- getting me into, you know, into a productive situation there.

Q: And this is 1940?

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, 1940, yeah. Well I- I graduated on uh.. February 28th, 1941. We started in November and then we graduated in February.

Q: And at that time were you assigned to UTAH?

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah that's right. Because we- we would- we would all put in for what we would like to have. I know I put in for Asiatic duty, but I didn't get it, thank God. But a lot of us did, and then they- they wound up over in the Philippines and places like that. But I got- plus I got onboard the UTAH and was at San Pedro, California. That's where- where she was stationed at the time.

Q: And when did UTAH come to the Hawaiian Islands?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well we came twice actually. When I got aboard, we- we came out in about April of 1941, and then they decided to re- remodel the ship, and then they sent us back up to Birch [ph?]. And so we went, and we went-- and- and then after we had been remodeled and put on modern

anti-aircraft batteries and whatever, then they sent us back to Hawaii to continue the bombing and uh.-- what is it called?; there's two different kind of-- horizontal bombing and dive bombing, by-- this is according to the Navy. So we had just finished that, and Friday and Saturday we came into port, and Sunday we were sunk. It- it went that fast.

Q: So let me understand. How long was UTAH in Hawaii when it returned the second time?

Tom Murray Anderson: Oh let's see. We- we left there about September, I think it was. Yeah, we- we-- yeah, we- we left there first. So- so it was September, October, November, about three or four months that we were there before. And they were conducting the bombing practices onboard the ship. And then-- so then uh.. we were just- we were all done with that on the Friday before- Sunday before 7- December 7th; pardon me. And so we were all set to start stripping off all the- all the protection uh.. to when we were being bombed. We had directors, gun directors and- and gun mounts that had to be protected from the bombings. And so they were just ready to start stripping all that off and getting-- so everything was- everything was loose on the ship, so when it rolled over these timbers and things they plugged up a lot of the uh.. exits for the men to get off. So they just couldn't get out because the thing was just blocked by all these 6 x 12 timbers, 20 feet long; were pretty heavy things to be moving around. So.

Q: I want to get back to that. It sounds very interesting. But I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about life in Pearl Harbor for a junior officer, such as yourself; life in Hawaii, what the liberty was like-- or shore leave I should say.

Tom Murray Anderson: For- for an officer? I- I was a junior officer at the time.

Q: Yes sir.

Tom Murray Anderson: So when I went aboard the UTAH, I was privileged to get a stateroom. Most of the time a junior officer wound up in the bunkroom, up- up by Turret One I guess. But in- but I was one of the three of- of the V7 that were assigned to the UTAH. So we all got staterooms; just I was in a- in a pretty good situation there. And as far as uh.. being in

Honolulu, well I- I wasn't much of a guy for going on- on shore, I wasn't-- liberty to shore leave. I just- just pretty much stuck pretty close to the ship, most of the time. But anyway, the attitude at the time was well just, it's a big- no big deal. The Japanese weren't any threat to us, as far as we concerned. Everybody kinda looked down on them. And there was- was some kind of a story that some commander claimed, "Well I've got the Japanese fleet surrounded. What'll I do with 'em?" And they said, "Oh, just let 'em go." <laughs> They weren't- they weren't gonna sink the Japanese fleet at that time, 'cause they had a-- we- we just didn't have any respect for them, like we should've had. That's part of the surprise that- that they were so good, that they did such a job on us there at Pearl Harbor. But they had it all their own way then. But still. We know that they- they did an excellent job of working us over; that's for sure.

Q: Maybe talk a little bit more about what UTAH was doing. She helped with pulling the targets or helping with the targeting practice.

Tom Murray Anderson: Well see, the- the UTAH was acting as a target for the- the area- area; high level bombers of the Army and the dive bombers of the Navy. So we were uh.. geared up to- to deal with that. See, 'cause we- we didn't leave the ship when it was being bombed. In the old days, they used to drop 500-pound bombs on the thing, and they'd go through a couple of decks once in awhile. But with us, we had 100-pound water bombs, and then the small flash bombs for the dive bombing practice. So that's- that's what we- we were doing, and it wasn't really dangerous. So I remember one time one of those flash bombs landed on the turret on top of my head. It sounded like it was gonna come right through the turret there. But it just made so much noise; you know, just- just a helluva of a bang and it crashed. And so.

Q: So what was happening was the aircraft had dummy ordinance, not real ordinance.

Tom Murray Anderson: No. They- they had what they called the little-little flash bombs, that they- they had. So they made smoke, and they also made a flash, uh.. so that they could tell if they were getting hits or not. But it wasn't intended to do any damage to the ship. They did a little damage but not very much.

Q: But UTAH was in fact a target.

Tom Murray Anderson: It was a target. Yeah, it was being a physical target. And I remember one time they did hit us with a 50-pound bomb and it shook the whole ship, from seven-- just a- just a- a 50-pound bomb. You wouldn't think that'd be much of a- an impact, but it was. It just- it just shook the whole ship, just from that one little bomb.

Q: And you referred a little bit to some of the protections that were aboard the ship to protect the equipment. Could you talk a little bit more about that?

Tom Murray Anderson: Uh.. if you've seen some of the pictures of the UTAH as it's being rolled over, there's this structure on top of one of the turrets, and we called them doghouses. They were made of light metal, like uh.. half-inch steel, I guess to- to protect the-- they- they had directors and- and gun mounts that were underneath these doghouses. And so they- they- they would-- of course, they physically prevented anything from happening. We couldn't shoot any of our ordinance because they were covered- covered up with those doghouses. And then, of course, they had planks on top to the deck of the ship so that the- the bigger bombs would- would just shatter the- the- the planks, but they wouldn't really do any damage to speak of. So the ship was pretty well covered with those timbers, 6- 6- 6 x 12, 20 feet long; were pretty heavy timbers. And- and so when- when the ship did start rolling, there were those timbers that slid around and blocked exits and entrances, and- and I guess hit people also. So it became a real catastrophe when it started. And I was- I was lucky that I was able to get off without getting hit. But I was on the quarterdeck at that time. So I was pretty-- they- they didn't have too many timbers right there; that I recall anyway.

Q: Could you tell us about that morning? You were aboard the ship. Were you up and already about your business, or in your stateroom, or--

Tom Murray Anderson: Oh see, what- what happened. I had had the watch that morning. I was-- most of the deck in port-- and I was to relieve the deck at quarter to eight-- we always relieved the deck, you know, 15 minutes ahead of time-- and getting ready to relieve. And that particular morning I'd- I'd been on a party the night before, and didn't into bed until about midnight I guess. And- and so when it came time-- I almost overslept my watch, and I had-- and I didn't have-- my wallet and everything was- was back in the stateroom. So I just-- and then, of course, I- I reported to the- to the deck. And- and then uh.. things started happening about- about the attack. So- so kind of a strange thing happened there. There was a-- uh- uh.. a call went

out for the Fire and Rescue parties, as I recall. Some other people don't seem to remember that. But anytime there was a fire, they had what they called the Fire and Rescue. Every ship would put uh.. a whaleboat in the water and then go to the scene of the accident or whatever it was. And so we had a lot of boats in the water at the time. And we didn't know we were under attack. Even the- the- the headquarters didn't know we were under attack, when the first- first thing hit. Uh.. they- they dive bombed the- the seaplane base there in Ford Island, but they were still-- so then we had-- they said this- this thing, the smoke and the fire, they- they called away the- the Fire and Rescue party, instead of going for a general uh- uh.. general headquarters right away. And in my particular case, I saw a dive bombing attack take place, and I says uh...-- we- we saw the bombs fall. We didn't know what they were even. We'd never seen a thing like that before; it was-- which like they'd done. And something fell out of the-- and so that was, of course, they said the bombs that were being dropped on Ford Island. And- and then I saw another plane came down the side of the ship and did a wing, and there was the meatballs on the bottom of the wing. Then we knew what was going on, but not until they'd seen that, the Japanese insignia on the bottom of this plane. And then, of course, then I ran over and turned in the general alarm, and we had officers coming aboard the ship. And they didn't report to the quarterdeck, they just came up. Of course, everybody just went down below decks, as fast as they could go. You know? And then they tried to say, "What's going? What's- what are you guys all excited about?" But they didn't stop to say anything about it, they just kept on running.

Q: Well let me ask, the quarterdeck, did you have a brow over to the shore, or were you running boats from the quarterdeck? How were people coming and going?

Tom Murray Anderson: From the boats? We were tied up to a mooring platform. But we- we didn't go to shore. There was no place to go ashore, except just on Ford Island. So everything was with the small boats. So we had starboard- port and starboard brows. And, of course, the officers went on the portside and the men- enlisted men on the starboard side. That's the way it usually worked there.

Q: Where was the quarterdeck?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well it was just beyond the- beyond the smokestacks; uh.. it was- it was the after part of the-- between- between

turrets.. two- two and three, I guess it was. Because it was in a space that was-- you know, it was kind of an open space there, what they called the quarterdeck.

Q: Oh, a _____ ships.

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, swordships, yeah. Yeah.

Q: Okay. I was trying to understand where you were.

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, so I was-- well see, the gangplanks were on each- either side of the quarterdeck, and I was on the starboard side, the star, and then I went over to the other side where the fellows were coming onboard the ship, and this is just before we had been torpedoed. Because I remember I went- went to the port brow and told them the boats-- I said, "Get around the other side of the ship." I noticed something was going on, but I wasn't really aware of what- what it was. But for them to get around where they'd be more protected from the attack. And we were torpedoed on the port side, and some of the boats didn't get out of the way in time. So they were sunk, because just the blast of the thing sunk some of the Liberty boats there. And then, of course, I was standing right next to that when the- the torpedo hit. It sent a column of water I suppose 100 feet, and then all of it coming down on top of me. I'm standing there in my white uniform. It knocked me down and I just-- didn't think it was ever gonna stop coming. It just kept pouring and pouring down on top of me, and I guess- I guess I kind of panicked when that happened. You just- just say, "When is gonna end anyway?" And then- then, of course, then I went in and turned the general alarm in, and.. got us started anyways. It turned out that that was.. uh.. a lifesaver. Some of them said-- the men that were in the brig, of course, were always released, anytime you went to general quarters. So by sending that general alarm, then I got the guys out. I didn't know that 'til 50 years later. It was- it was the 50th anniversary and a guy told me, he said, "You know, I was in the brig and you saved my life when you turned in the general alarm." So they just turned him loose.

Q: Did you see the attack on Ford Island yourself, from your position on the quarterdeck?

Tom Murray Anderson: No I didn't see that, at that time. But later on I was on Ford Island when they were still attacking. And- and then- then we- we saw the- the planes going overhead, and the anti-aircraft fire wasn't coming anywheres near the Japanese planes apparently. And then we- but then we started hearing this shrapnel coming down all around us, kachunk, kachunk, kachunk, and we better get under cover somewhere. So we got into a warehouse, and it turned out to be full of ammunition. But it wasn't hit; it come awfully close to being hit. But then we-- so after the attack we went outside and we found the- the big bomb had hit about 25 yards in the corner of our building. And- and- and there- there was-- the- the concrete wall just waved like a piece of canvas, when that thing had uh.. exploded right next to the- next to the warehouse there.

Q: If I could take you back a few minutes.

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah.

Q: It may have seemed like hours, huh? While you were still aboard UTAH. Could you describe the attack on UTAH itself and the events that unfolded, and now she was lost?

Tom Murray Anderson: Like I said, the first thing, I- I saw planes go past. You know, they- they didn't attack us but they just flew past and then went over toward 10-10 dock, to- to do the strafing I guess. And then I went to the other side of the ship. And actually I didn't see very much of the attack because although we were torpedoed on that side and it had- and it had knocked everything out. And so it was- it was pretty fast. There wasn't a lot of speculation about, you know, what was going on at that time. Just-- and then, of course, I- I- I'd sent messages to the head of department that Japanese were attacking, and that's before we actually were hit. But you never did come to the quarterdeck, you just-- for some reason this Officer Michaels, I guess his name was, he started inspecting the ship, after it'd been hit, and we never did come to the quarterdeck. So I- I kind of don't know really what the problem was there. But he- he was at least notified that we were under attack. But we hadn't been hit at that time. So. And when we were hit, of course, it was that, the torpedoes on the portside. And then- and then, of course, uh.. everybody knew then we'd been hit with something all right. And then by getting the general alarm going; and then alerted them there was a serious situation. But as far as a lot of preliminary, I don't remember much about that.

Q: What happened after the torpedo had struck?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well the ship immediately started to lift. But it was fortunate the torpedo just kicked it over about 10 degrees; just right now, just immediately, just started the thing, and then after that, then it just kept rolling over, just- just to the portside. And then it went over real fast there. So just there wasn't any speculation about what was gonna happen. People were getting off the ship and sliding down lines and walking on the bottom. And because that's where a lot of them got killed. The Japanese came over and strafed the- strafed the- the bottom of the ship while it was rolling over. But I was far enough over to the left side- the- the right side, that I didn't get involved in that. So I was just uh.. lucky I guess that they- they-- because we were getting off the ship on the starboard side. Of course, it was rolling the other way. So they just walked across the bottom and stepped off onto the-- we had to have-- boats were in the water and they picked up people from the water. So that's sort of the way it was there.

Q: She rolled away from the shore.

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, away from the shore, yeah.

Q: And so the people left-- when they left the ship, they tried to leave towards the shore?

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, toward the- toward the shore, yeah. Because all they had to do then was just walk on the bottom as it was rolling over. And- and, as I said, we had ships, boats, in the water. So most of the- some of us got onto what they called the mooring platforms, and then they picked them up from there too. They'd go from the ship to the mooring platform, and then the boats took 'em over to Ford Island, and got- got away from the ship that way.

Q: Is that how you got away from the ship?

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah.

Q: You went onto the mooring platform?

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And then a boat--

Tom Murray Anderson: Boats picked us up and took us to shore. You know, there was one incident. There was a Lieutenant Jones that had got into the water on- next to the ship there. And I tried to pull him out. He didn't want to get out, he wanted to stay down where he thought it was safe, I guess. But some of them-- he was-- it's happened to people who panic sometimes, you know, and you just- just want to get away from the action, if you possibly can. But we-- I was ready to jump in and pull him out, and then somebody else got a hand on and pulled him out too. But that was one of the incidents that happened there, trying to get onto the mooring platforms.

Q: How much freeboard, if you will, was there from the mooring platform to the boat? Could you just step into the boat, or did you have to--

Tom Murray Anderson: Oh well let's see. Well we- we had gangways, and- and what you'd do, you'd go down the gangway and then you'd get onto where the- the- the- the ships they had. Uh.. they had a-- what did they call it? It was- it was- it was a- a boom that went out from the ship, and the- and the- the boats tied up to this boom. So you could walk out on the boom and then drop down in to the ship. But you-- so you had some ladders, I think, like Jacob's ladders, that you could-- to go down to get down into the boats there.

Q: I'm trying to visualize the scene. So the boat took you to Ford Island.

Tom Murray Anderson: Ford Island, yeah.

Q: And what transpired at that point?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well at that--

Q: To you?

Tom Murray Anderson: To- to me? Well I was on the beach and I could still see men coming off the ship, and I yelled at them, "Get off of there, like 'cause that's an abandoned ship>" That was-- that's the closest thing I could come to it, at the time anyway. And- and when we got on the beach, they'd been doing some excavation, some pipelines and things, and there was a big ditch there, and I ordered them in, all into this ditch. But then there wasn't any room for me, when they got them all in the ditch. And the- the stuff was coming straight down, of course. But then a lot of the strafing was going into the sides. So if they're in that- in that ditch, they'd be somewhat protected from- from the- from the fire there. And that's about the time we heard the- the shells-- what- what do you call it?-- the shrapnel hitting the ground all around us there. And took shelter in that warehouse with- full of 50-caliber ammunition. But I don't think that would've been much of a hazard, 'cause it wouldn't explode; probably had- had a big bang. It'd just go one at a time or something like that. Anyway, so that's what happened on the beach. And then they came around later on with trucks and picked us up and took us over to a sub-base, as I recall. Remember, I had the-- I was in a white uniform at the time, and it was-- so it was all covered with mud and oil. And I finally took the- the jumper off and just threw it away, because I just- I didn't want to attract attention to myself as a- as a white- you know, with those white uniforms and then that back- back- dull background there.

Q: What were you thinking? Or were you thinking?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well- well I- I don't think we were thinking much of anything. Because I remember that I never felt scared. But at least some of the people-- it wasn't until sometime later, a couple of weeks later, we had a- an alert that we was gonna have another air attack. Well then we were scared at that time. But not this time, particularly; just- just things were happening that you just-- I don't know how else to describe it actually. But I don't recall anybody panicking or being really scared. You're- you're trying to get out from under the- the attack all right. But- but it wasn't like later on, when you're- you're scared shitless that they're coming-- they're gonna do it over- do it over again to you. So, that- that was kind of the way it was. I don't recall uh.. being panicked really.

Q: What could you see, when you were at Ford Island, and then later that day?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well one of the things that happened there. You know, there was a midget submarine that was sunk inside Pearl Harbor and we were-- we- we saw that happen. We were on the beach at that time, and we- we saw this big-- the dep [ph?] charge, I think it was a big cloud of black mud that way. It wasn't a nice white thing, like you see in- in- in the- in the movies. But this was just all black mud. And- and there was some marines there and they told us, "Get back from the shore." You know, uh.. just protecting us from the attack of that, on that midget submarine. And then-- see then, they- they- they rounded us up, and I think I was taken over to the sub-base. And then they put us to bed, just all in a baseball field at night. And that particular night is when the- the Enterprise planes tried to come in and land at Ford Island. And we saw that happen, and everybody was shooting; uh.. just a big cone of fire was going up toward where these poor guys were trying to land on Ford Island. And I think they got a few of them. But was uh..-- you know, we didn't get any sleep that night. We were just laying out there on the- on- on the ball field. It- it wasn't until the next day they started getting it organized with anything. I remember there was-- they- they- they gave us some clothing. I had a set of red, I mean, blue dungarees with a big red ball in the corner. The- the marines said, "Get that thing offa there before you get shot as a Jap spy or something." But they had this kind of a big red ball was on the- on- on the- on the front of the uniform. That was just a trademark, I guess, for the company that- that made those things. And we made plenty of noise when we walked around, because the Marines were ready to shoot anybody on sight too. They were all armed and ready- ready to go. And so it was a pretty hairy night there. And I think-- I can't quite make the differential of when we were taken from the Navy yard into the- to the airfield there at the sub-base. But that's where we spent the night anyway, at the sub-base. And then the next day we-- the next day or two-- they'd salvaged one of the Japanese submarines and they were up there, pulling the torpedoes out. But they didn't make any provision for what was gonna happen when it came out. And the thing, it popped out suddenly and hit the ground, and- and everybody scattered in all directions. But- but the thing didn't go off, it didn't explode. But there'd have been all of us killed if that thing hadda exploded. 'Cause I-- even though I was a couple of hundred yards away, the-- you know, the directed blast or something like that would just about get anybody there. But anyway, that was the- the closest call we had, when they pulled that darn torpedo out of the Japanese submarines.

Q: Two questions. What was your division, and did you take an accounting of your division after the attack; take a muster?

Tom Murray Anderson: Lets see. I think at that time I was in the uh... I had just transferred from the C&N division to uh... or I was a-- my general quarter state was in a- in a magazine, down about the fifth deck down. So I don't remember exactly what division I was in. It just- it happened so fast; you know, that I was transferred to a new division. And I wasn't able to get to my station, of course, because I had the- the deck that morning. And- and as far as- as accounting for the men, I don't recall I ever did that. Somebody else did that I guess. We didn't have to account for-- well I- I know that somebody did, of course. But that was after we had got on the beach and we were in a- in a boat-- what- what do they call them?-- a bar- a barracks. We were assigned to a barracks, with all the UTAH survivors there. The captain and all the men and all the people were there.

<Crew talk>

Q: Could you again go through-- after you got onto Ford Island, kind of what activity did you engage yourself in, and what did you see, what did you witness?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well we can start with I got the men in the trench there; that was the- the first thing. And then there was- then there wasn't any room for myself and another officer by the name of Hogan that-- so we were just kind of at odds. Then we started hearing this shrapnel coming down all around us, kachunk here, kachunk, kachunk. And I said, "We better get under cover somewhere." And so we got into this warehouse, and- and we were in there when the Japanese dropped a bomb on Ford Island. It came-- they said it was only about 25 yards of- of where we were in this warehouse, and when that went off, then we had to come outside and see what was going on. And- and so I remember looking up and seeing these high-level bombers coming over the top, at- at that particular time. And- and they were- they were- they weren't any- any wheres near. The anti-aircraft fire was- was totally ineffective. They were about 1000 feet below where- where they- they exploded. But the thing is, is, you know, your- your- your fire directors, the system doesn't work until the gyro is stabilized. So in the beginning, none of the gyros of course were stabilized. So the fire was very ineffective anyway. Because if- if-- you know, it'd take at least, I think it's at least, a couple of hours to get the gyros going again. So we were just local controlling all this firing back at the Japanese.

Q: Do you remember seeing people coming out of the water on the other side of Ford Island, where the other ships were?

Tom Murray Anderson: No I didn't. See, we- we- we were picked up by a truck and taken around to where the ferry was. And I remember the one that tripped it. The NEVADA was going down this stream and she was all on fire. The bridge was all fire-- call 'em a fire; the boughs- the bridge of the ship. And then they- then they got us over there to the Navy base. And anyway, that's the one thing I do remember, seeing that NEVADA going down the stream, all on fire.

Q: Do you recall the cruiser that was behind her?

Tom Murray Anderson: No I don't. Let's see. There- there's so much. You've seen so many movies and pictures, it's kind of hard sometimes to differentiate what actually happened, or was that something that you saw in the movies? You know? But no, I don't remember anything about that. I remember there was some story about one of the cruisers went- went to sea, on the other side of it, on the north side of Ford Island. And then that's where-- of course, they'd go around the island when they were leaving. They'd- they'd come in from, kind of like clock- counter-clockwise thing. So everybody was going away from us then, when we were on that-- because then I was on the other side of the island, so I wouldn't have seen that.

Q: Did they put you to work?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well yeah, I was- I was put on the inshore-- not- not the inshore but the-- what do they call it?-- the- the manpower pool. The- the- the first few days, the ships that were there, they would call for drafts of men. Because almost all the ships that were sunk, they- they sub-served those crew members in short order, because most of the ships were under-manned. They may be 75% manned of their crews. So they- they sucked up practically all the survivors, right- right away. It didn't take long. They'd have 300 men to go to this ship, or 200 men go to that ship. And so they would-- there was a manpower pool, and they would just round up as many as they needed and send them out to some ship, and away they'd go. So that was-- and then- and then- then I- and then I finally got involved in what they called the inshore patrolling. They- they were going through the manpower pool pretty-- like I say, got most of them taken care of, and then they had to find something else for us to do. So I volunteered for the inshore

patrol, and they put me on a Japanese sampan for a year, a fish- a fishing boat, and the Kosogumuru [ph?] was my- my ship for a year down there. So then I got sent to Hawaii.

Q: What was the name of it?

Tom Murray Anderson: Kosogumuru <laughs>. And actually it was a YP-169, is what it was. But it had the name on the ship, on a board, and then-- and it was carved right in the stern of the boat. And then they had the Japanese flags onboard. And so those guys were Japanese when they were at sea, and they were Americans when they came back to base. So I had no- I had no confidence that they would-- if we'd have been captured, they would've been all just right out there with the Japanese; I'm sure of that, just the way it was. Because we- we- we had-- there's a place called Kewalo Base; and is that still out there, Honolulu area? You know, that's where all fishing boats tied up. And so we were sent out there to- to choose a boat for our inshore patrol. And some of the guys sneaked up on some of the Japanese fishermen, and they were talking, "We've got Nippon." They were listening to the Japanese radio. They were all excited about that. I don't know what they were supposed to be doing. But anyway, they were pretty much loyal Japanese, I think. You know, they'd talk about they did such a great job of volunteering for service. Well that's the Japanese way anyway. The families always get together with their families when they're sent off to war. And so there wasn't anything, any special preference, patriotism, as far as I was concerned. Because, you know, there was quite a few of them were rounded up, certainly after Pearl Harbor, as- as oh suspicious characters, I guess you might say. So- so anyway, it was.. kind of a different situation. One of the things that they did, all the officers that were out there in Pearl Harbor, they gave us 045s, right after the attack. So we were all- all armed and prepared to enforce our will, if there was anything that we wanted them to do. And we knew that we could shoot, you know-- anyway, that was one thing, we were all armed. In fact, I had my pistols through the whole war I think. I- I never had to turn it back into until it was over with.

Q: Where did you live when you were in this duty?

Tom Murray Anderson: Well, of course, when I-- for the first- be- be-- well the ship was my home, in- in the beginning. And then, of course, then later on I married a- a woman, a Hawaiian lady, and- and I brought her over to the

States. And we- we- we lived with my folks. And I didn't really have a- a home until after the war was over. Uh.. I- I lived with my family.

Q: Well my question was, when you were part of the inshore patrol, security--

Tom Murray Anderson: Oh, oh, oh, oh. Well we lived on the boat. That's-- that was our home. Well we- we did have-- what am I trying to say? I think we- we couldn't go-- because I think they had a-- what do- what do they call that? A sub-- they had a sub-base, but I don't recall we ever spent any time at the sub-base, just because we-- they had us pretty busy patrolling then. We'd go out at night and then patrol all night, and then come back in during the day and take care of whatever we had to do. But no, no, really the boat was our home. And then later on we were sent down to Hilo, Hawaii, and then the- the old gunboat, Sacramento, was our home. We- we were onboard the ship for meals and sleeping and whatever. But we'd go out on the boats at night, and patrol the harbor out there, at Hilo. Then we started making trips around the islands, clear around the islands of Hawaii. We, about every ten days we'd go and make a round of the islands. Our job was just to harass any Japanese submarines that may be out there, to keep 'em down so they couldn't charge through batteries and things like that. So, but I think if- if we'd ever come across a Japanese submarine, I wouldn't be here today, 'cause there was no way that we were gonna be able to- to attack them, unless we just happened to be right on top of it. They- they told us that you couldn't drop a dep charge less than 300 feet, because it would be dangerous to us. But we figured that by God if we got a Japanese submarine, we're gonna go alongside and drop all our dep charges, blow both of us up. We were the first kamikazes I guess. But we knew it was- it was stupid to think that you're gonna go out, and if you lived long enough to get alongside a ship, are you gonna drop the dep charges to 300 feet? No way. Just gonna blow the whole place up. That was our attitude anyway.

Q: Did you have command of the YP?

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, I was the-- yeah, they made a mistake. I was supposed to be called Officer-in-Charge. But Comm- Comm 14 assigned me as Commanding Officer of YP-169. So that wasn't really supposed to be. And when you're a small boat, you're not a commanding officer, you're just an officer in charge. But, you know, I was commanding officer <laughs>.

Q: And how long did you serve in that capacity?

Tom Murray Anderson: For about a year. I was-- we-- they built a sub-base down at Hilo, and- and things were starting to shape up. We were getting rid of those old boats. You know, they had a thing-- the inshore patrol is made up of oh converted yachts and fishing boats and all kind of-- anybody that they could put a dep charge on and send 'em to sea, to this-- did you ever hear of a thing called the ping line out there, in front of Pearl Harbor?

Q: I have heard of it.

Tom Murray Anderson: Yeah, uh.. they- they'd have ships that weren't assigned to any particular duty, they'd put 'em on this ping line, and the idea was to, of course, make that impregnable for the-- you know, Japanese submarines could come in and out. And so that- that was quite a- quite a situation there. They'd- they'd have a- an extra boat come in. So then they'd they have to shuffle all the- all the- all the boats in their ping line, and then-- and some, they'd lose some, and then they'd have to shuffle them out. So they- so they kind of sent the orbits around the-- they would just-- we- we didn't have any- any way to tell where we were, because somebody might break in the- break in the black, and then we'd figure out where that was and use that just to navigate our- our boats. Because we didn't have- didn't have any sound gear, didn't have any radar. All they had was just a-- didn't have a phasometer on board. They just had a-- what did I have? All they had was just- just the engine and the-- anyway, there was- there was no way to tell where you were out there, except by the reference to other boats. It was pretty haphazard. I remember one time I'd just made a turn and another boat came right up my- my track. I just- just barely missed the guy out there. So it was a pretty- a pretty hazardous place to be.

Q: Did you stay in the Navy?

Tom Murray Anderson: No, I was- I was-- I- I- I made lieutenant before the war was over, and I decided to get out of the Navy. I'd been oh passed over a couple of times. And then- and then when I went before an interview was a- a captain, I guess, in Seattle, and they said, "Well it's better to make your mistakes then instead of now." They kind of encouraged me. But I just decided I'd rather be a forester than a naval officer. And- and I married a Chinese wife- woman at the time, and- and they weren't really welcome in the war, during those days. Minority people, you know? So it's one of those things. I made the decision just to get out of the Navy. I stayed in the Reserves though. I did do that. Anyways, had a wife and three kids, and four

jobs out of the Naval Reserve helped to put some meat on the table. And so I- I put in my 20 years in the Reserve. And I just figured I didn't wanna- didn't wanna be a- on Active Duty really, 'cause it just wasn't- wasn't the thing to do I think at that time.

Q: When you think back on December 7th and losing the UTAH, what comes to mind? What's the most memorable, the most significant thought and feeling that you recall?

Tom Murray Anderson: Oh, that's--. A lot of the comrades that I had lost, you know, and- and some- some of them that had been real close to me and that they- they were lost that day. I know that- that that's something that we could never replace, and- and just the fact that they weren't there anymore. It's just kind of hard to accept the fact that you- you'd lost them so quickly, and- and-- I don't know. It's just kind of hard to single out any one thing really; to me anyway. But the fact that we were attacked so- in such a surprising manner, and...-- does that answer your question at all?

Q: I think so, yeah. Is there anything that you'd like to say, that we didn't think to ask, that--

Tom Murray Anderson: No, I think you were pretty thorough here. Uh.. have- have I covered all your questions, uh.. to your satisfaction, do you think?

Q: Oh I think you have sir. I thank you very much.

Tom Murray Anderson: Okay.

Q: I thank you for your service.

Tom Murray Anderson: Thank you Captain.

Q: Let me ask you one more question. I did think of one; I'm sorry. Have you been back before now?

Tom Murray Anderson: Oh yeah, we've been back about every five years. We- we started in 1966, with the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. And I came back in '71. And then see I didn't make it for '76. Uh.. that was about the end of my job. But, you know, I've been out-- I've only missed, I think, a couple of them though. I didn't make it for the 55th, because my wife was going through dementia, and so uh.. she couldn't come this last time. And then she's finally passed away. So. So yeah, I've- I've been very-- I'm active in the Pearl Harbor Survivors chapter in Seattle, and one in Tacoma. But now I- I can't get around much anymore. I've- I've got this Parkinson's, and I got the-- what do you call that stuff? That- that eye condition. Oh, what the hell is that? Cataracts. I'm- I'm- I'm scheduled for some cataract operation here pretty- pretty soon. So that- that's some of the things that happen to you too. Did I answer your question?

Q: Yes sir you have, and I thank you very much.

Tom Murray Anderson: Okay.

Q: Thank you very much. And thank you for your service.

Tom Murray Anderson: Thank you sir for interviewing me here. I've been told to get busy and tell my story. I guess you've given me a chance to do that too.

Q: We appreciate it.

Tom Murray Anderson: All right, thank you very much.

End of Tape 410 Tom Murray Anderson